

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on September 28, 2006. Claims 6, 8-10, 12-18, 21, 29-30 and 33-34 are amended herein. Claims 1-24 and 29-34 remain pending in this application. Detailed responses to the rejections are as follows:

Support for Specification Amendments

The amendments to the specification are to correct typographical errors and are supported at least by the unamended paragraphs beginning on page 16, line 27, and on page 17, line 14.

Support for Claim Amendments

Claims 6, 8-10, 12-18, 21, 29-30 and 33-34 are amended herein. It is believed that no new subject matter has been added by the amendments. The support for the amendments to claims 6, 12, 14 are found, at least, by the specification page 16, line 3 to page 18, line 23. Claim 13 has been amended. The amendment is supported, at least, by the specification at FIG. 2; FIG. 17B; page 17, lines 18-21. Claims 8-10, 16-19, 29 and 34 were amended for clarity. Claims 16-19 were amended to correct dependency in light of the amendments to claim 14. Amendments to claims 15, 21 and 30 are believed to have been supported at least by FIG. 17B and the corresponding portions of the specification. The amendment to claim 33 is believed to be supported at least by the specification at page 18, line 4.

Drawing Objection

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) on the assertion that they “failed to show at least one elongate coupling member being coupled to the plate structure as described in the specification.” FIGS 17A and 17B have been amended to show a depression 144 which is defined in part by two side edges 146, 148, and in one option forms an elongate coupling member. The amendments are supported at least by the specification at the unamended paragraph beginning on page 17, line 14. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested in the next official action.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 6-21 and 29-34 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1-17 of Hawkins (U.S. Patent No. 6,679,461).

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is traversed by amendments made in this response. Insofar as the rejection is deemed to be applied to the claims as amended, Applicant respectfully proposes to defer a response to the provisional non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting rejections until an indication of otherwise allowable subject matter is made in this application.

§112 Rejection of the Claims

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and was asserted to be indefinite. Claim 21 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, because it was asserted by the office action: “it is not fully understood how a support structure has the means for elevating with respect to claim 14.”

Claim 21 was amended. Applicant believes the amendment renders the rejection moot and requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins (U.S. Patent No. 5,855,342, “Hawkins”) in view of Burgess et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,102,089, “Burgess”).

Claims 20 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins in view of Burgess and further in view of Wong et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,888,977, “Wong”).

Claims 20 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins in view of Burgess and further in view of Koncar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,942,347, “Koncar”).

Detailed responses to these rejections are as follows:

Claim 6

Applicant has searched the cited portions of the Hawkins, Burgess, Wong and Koncar patents and is unable to find, among other things, at least one elongate strut associated with a plate structure, as recited in claim 6. Since the combined references fail to teach all the limitations of claim 6, Applicant believes that claim 6 is allowable, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Claims 7, 9, 11-13 and 29-34

Claims 7, 9, 11-13 and 29-34 ultimately depend on claim 6, and are believed to be allowable at least for the reasons cited with respect to that claim. As such, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the claims.

Claim 14

Applicant is unable to find, among other things, in the cited portions of the Hawkins, Burgess, Wong and Koncar patents at least one elongate strut coupled to a plate structure, as recited in claim 14. Since the combined references fail to teach all the limitations of claim 14, Applicant believes that claim 14 is allowable, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

Claims 15-19

Claims 15-19 ultimately depend on claim 14, and are believed to be allowable at least for the reasons cited with respect to that claim. As such, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the claims.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney Tim Bianchi at (612) 373-6912 or Marvin Beekman at (612) 373-6960 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICK A. HAWKINS

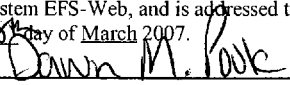
By his Representatives,

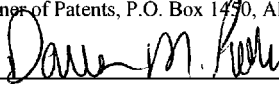
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being filed using the USPTO's electronic filing system EFS-Web, and is addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 28th day of March 2007.


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ANNOTATED
SHEET SHOWING
CHANGES

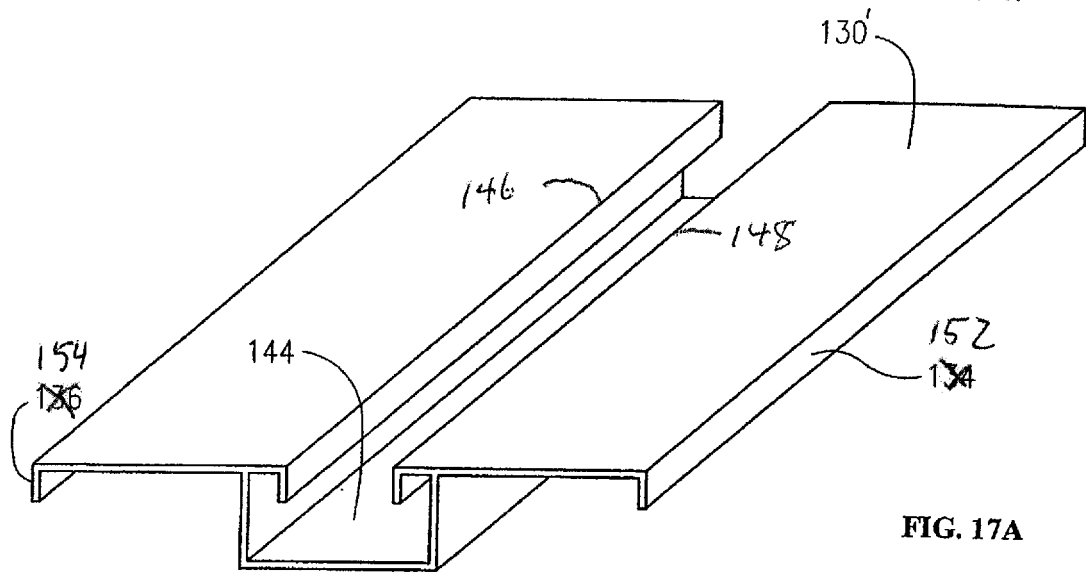


FIG. 17A

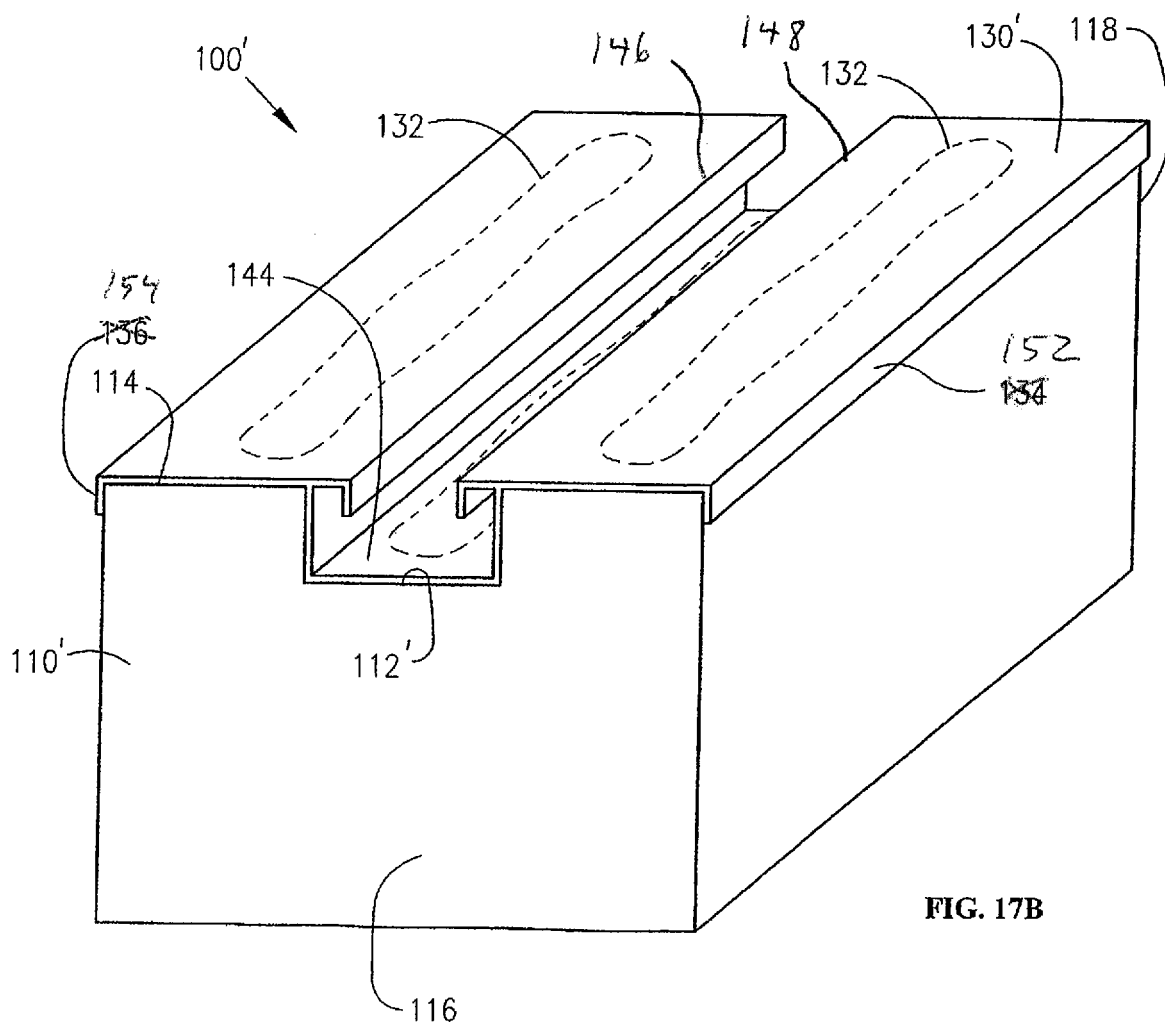


FIG. 17B